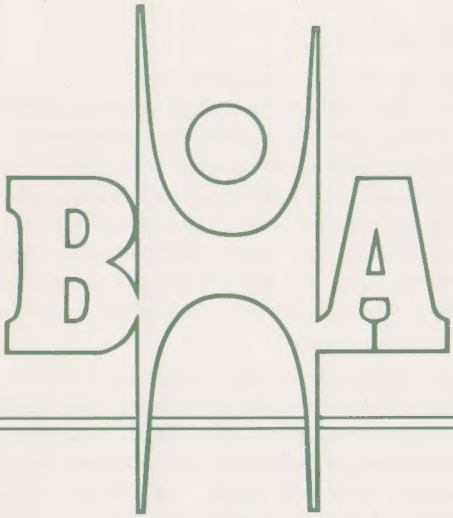
WHEN YOU JOIN THE BHA...



BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION
Registered Charity 235987
13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG
01-937 2341

WHEN YOU JOIN THE BHA . . .

When you join the British Humanist Association what sort of activities will you be supporting and subscribing to?

We are a charity whose aim is ". . . the advancement of Humanism – the moral and social development of the community free from theistic or dogmatic beliefs and doctrines."
This is an enormous task which we tackle in a variety of ways: by debate, by education, by comment on the social and moral issues of the day, and by encouraging a responsible approach to problems based on knowledge of the facts. We represent the rights and are the voice of the non-religious in our society. We are the focus and communication centre for those whose beliefs are non-theistic. We seek to achieve The Open Society.

How do we do all these things?

EDUCATION

In the past few years our most important work has been in the field of education, where Humanists have been part of committees responsible for developing religious education in schools. Gradually, our work is succeeding as the teaching of non-theistic life stances such as Humanism appears on the curriculum of more and more education authorities. We are now involved in producing teaching aids and in helping teachers to understand the Humanist stance.

Just as important is moral education, which we believe should permeate all teaching. But morality and religion have all too often been thought to be the same thing so, over twenty years ago, the BHA sponsored, and still leads, the Social Morality Council, which brings together leaders from all faiths and beliefs to agree a basis of morality and its teaching. Although progress has been slow, serious work is now going on in the Education Departments of two of our universities and is progressing through to schools.

Adults, too, need to be educated, and we work to have our fair share of time on radio and television. Articles by our members appear in serious journals and occasionally in the press. Now and then we sponsor public meetings.

AFFECTING THE CLIMATE OF OPINION

Humanists contribute to the debate on the topical issues of the day, particularly when these have relevance for the Open Society. We write to ministers and members of parliament, making our views quite clear, although our charitable status means that we have to approach certain political issues with care.

Recently, we have welcomed and responded to the Warnock Report, we have provided evidence on the immorality of the Powell Bill banning embryo research, we have urged the government to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Status of Women, we have supported the various teachers' organisations in their campaign to change the nature of religious assemblies.

All sorts of issues are important to us. Our main concerns and our approach to them are outlined in our General Statement of Policy. You will find that Humanist conferences and meetings around the country cover a very wide range of topics.

REPRESENTING THE NON-RELIGIOUS

We work to achieve equal status for non-religious people and their views.

We are beginning to get radio and television time. We regularly raise the question of universal affirmation in the courts. We have succeeded in establishing recognition for our very fine funeral ceremonies and are trying to achieve the right to conduct marriage ceremonies. We take up censorship issues and many other problems raised by our members.

SUSTAINING A HUMANIST COMMUNITY

We make friends with Humanists all over the country and keep them in touch with each other

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through Humanist Groups, through conferences, through the Humanist Newsletter, through our hospitality network, and through our regular discussions and social events in central London. Every member can contribute something to our movement and to our work, no matter where they live.

YOUR SUPPORT

There is a challenging amount still to be achieved. We are a small organisation. Our authority rests not on numbers but on the quality of our thinking and the quality of our debate. But little is achieved without cooperation and finance, and numbers do count. So we need your support and that of a much larger membership to give us a greater authority and strength in our social and moral campaigns.